image

6
OCT

$1.95
$2.45
Canada

MAXX

TM

Extreme Tracer

image™ COMICS PRESENTS

THE MAXX™

Story • Art
SAM KIETH

Swell Dialogue
BILL MESSNER-LOEBS

Finishes
JIM SINCLAIR

Lettering
MIKE HEISLER

Color
STEVE OLIFF & OLYOPTICS

Logo
CHANCE WOLF

Film Output
KELL-O-GRAPHICS

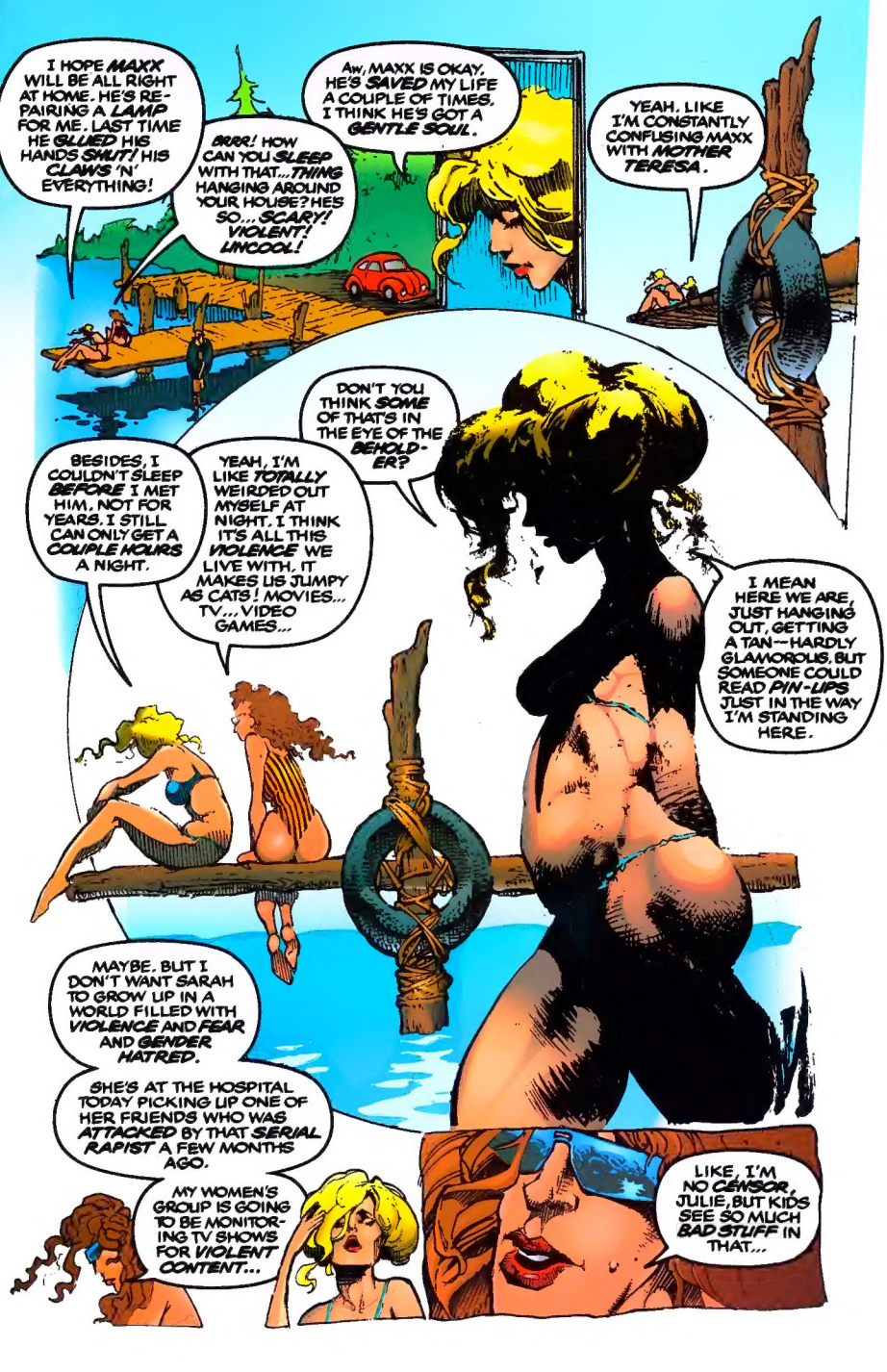
FOR IMAGE COMICS:

Publisher	TONY LOBITO
Promotions	KYLE ZIMMERMAN
Distribution	GERMAINE ZACHARIAH
Art Director	DOUG GRIFFITH
Administrative Assistant	KELLY VAN LANDINGHAM
Traffic Coordinator	TERESA CESPEDES
Controller	JOHN COGAN

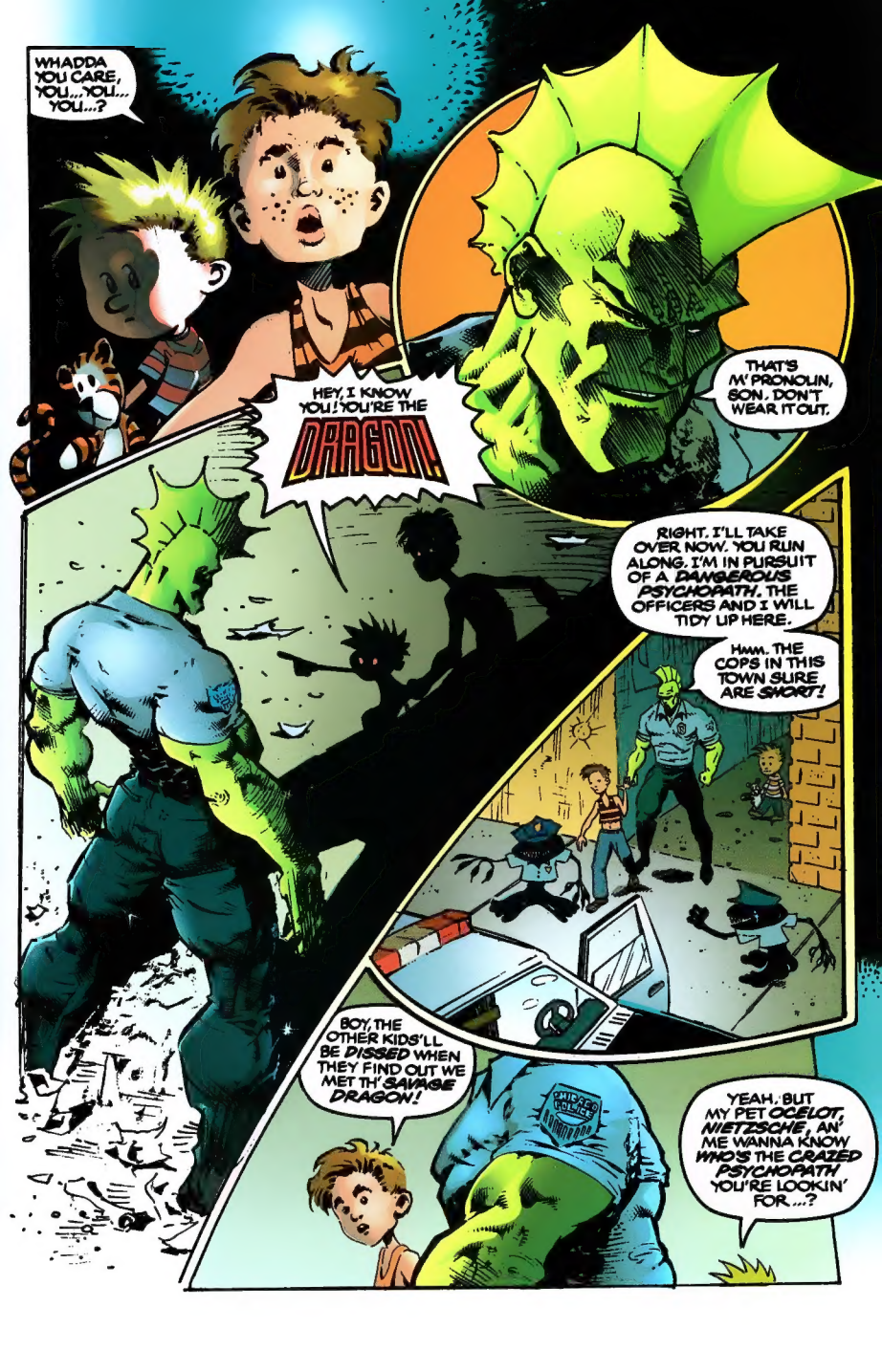
OLYOPTICS IS:
ABEL MOUTON
TRACEY ANDERSON
DENISE BEIN
CATHY ENIS
PATTI STRATTON JORDAN
KIRK MOBERT
QUINN SUPLEE
WILLIAM ZINDEL
LEA RUDE
MARIE

MAXX #6. November 1993. FIRST PRINTING. An Image Comics Group title published by Image Comics. Entire contents TM & © 1993 by Sam Kieth, except SAVAGE DRAGON and MAKO are TM & © 1993 by Erik Larsen, all rights reserved. Any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of the artist. So ya like cheese huh? Look here again and you'll be sorry! Send correspondence to: Sam Kieth, 4363 Hazel Avenue, Suite 1-285, Fair Oaks, California, 95628. Publishers and creator assume no responsibility for unsolicited materials.

Printed in Canada


I HOPE MAXX WILL BE ALL RIGHT AT HOME. HE'S REPAIRING A LAMP FOR ME. LAST TIME HE GLUED HIS HANDS SHUT! HIS CLAWS 'N' EVERYTHING!
GRRR! HOW CAN YOU SLEEP WITH THAT...THING HANGING AROUND YOUR HOUSE? HE'S SO... SCARY! VIOLENT! UNCOOL!
AW, MAXX IS OKAY. HE'S SAVED MY LIFE A COUPLE OF TIMES, I THINK HE'S GOT A GENTLE SOUL.
YEAH, LIKE I'M CONSTANTLY CONFUSING MAXX WITH MOTHER TERESA.
BESIDES, I COULDN'T SLEEP BEFORE I MET HIM, NOT FOR YEARS. I STILL CAN ONLY GET A COUPLE HOURS A NIGHT.
YEAH, I'M LIKE TOTALLY WEIRDED OUT MYSELF AT NIGHT. I THINK IT'S ALL THIS VIOLENCE WE LIVE WITH, IT MAKES US JUMPY AS CATS! MOVIES... TV... VIDEO GAMES...
DON'T YOU THINK SOME OF THAT'S IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER?
I MEAN HERE WE ARE, JUST HANGING OUT, GETTING A TAN—HARDLY GLAMOROUS, BUT SOMEONE COULD READ PIN-UPS JUST IN THE WAY I'M STANDING HERE.
MAYBE. BUT I DON'T WANT SARAH TO GROW UP IN A WORLD FILLED WITH VIOLENCE AND FEAR AND GENDER HATRED.
SHE'S AT THE HOSPITAL TODAY PICKING UP ONE OF HER FRIENDS WHO WAS ATTACKED BY THAT SERIAL RAPIST A FEW MONTHS AGO.
MY WOMEN'S GROUP IS GOING TO BE MONITORING TV SHOWS FOR VIOLENT CONTENT...
LIKE, I'M NO CENSOR, JULIE, BUT KIDS SEE SO MUCH BAD STUFF IN THAT...

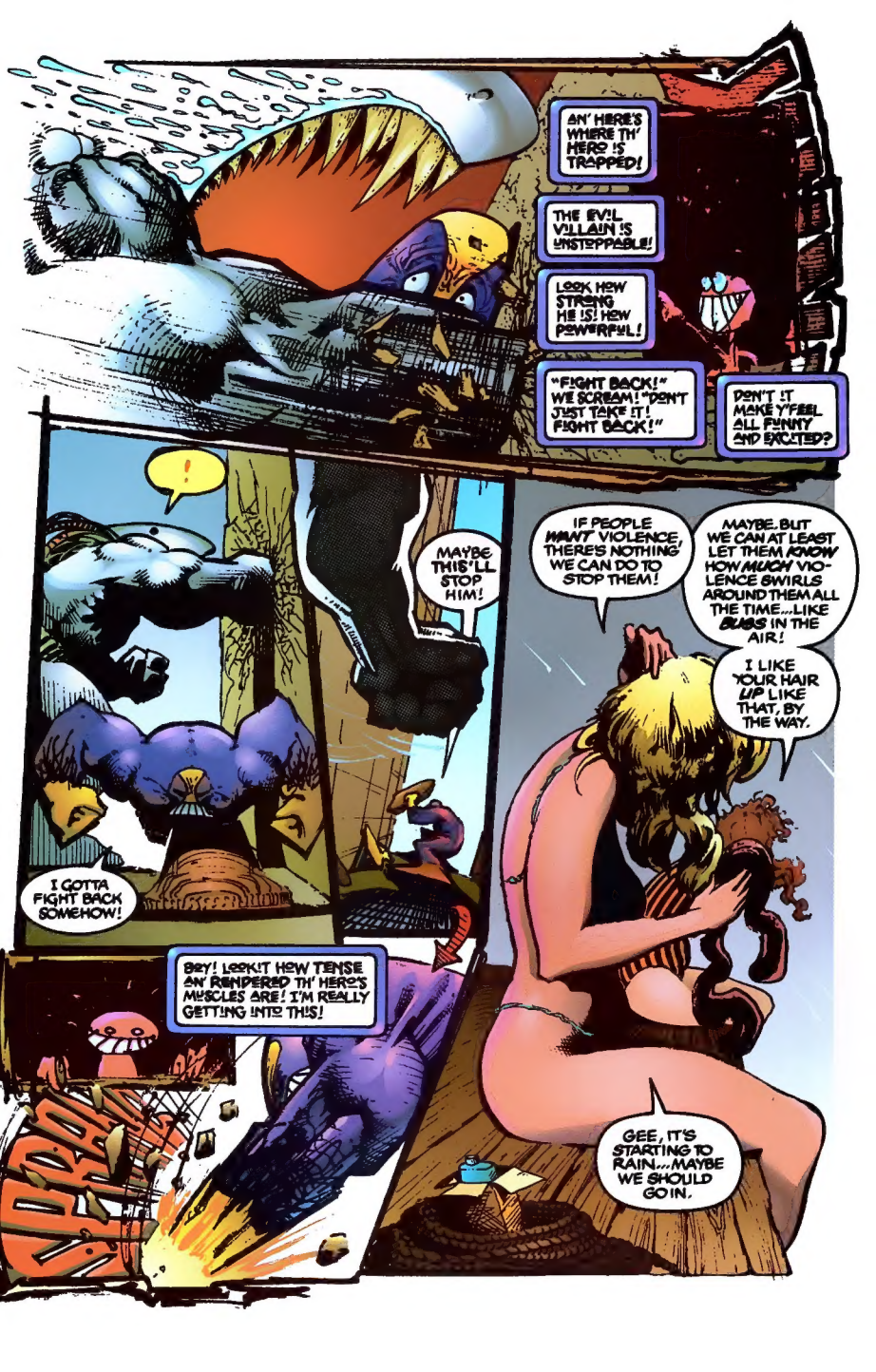
"...BOX--
SEE, LOOK IT, HENRY! I TOLD YOU! THERE'S A GUY INNA BOX!
"--THEY JUST DON'T RELATE...
LOOKS LIKE HE'S BEEN DEAD A LONG TIME!
"...WHEN THEY SEE...
WHACKY COOL, PETE. HE LOOKS ALL SOFT AND GUSHY! DO YOU THINK WE C'N MOLD HIM LIKE CLAY?
"...REALITY.
THAT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA, KIDS.

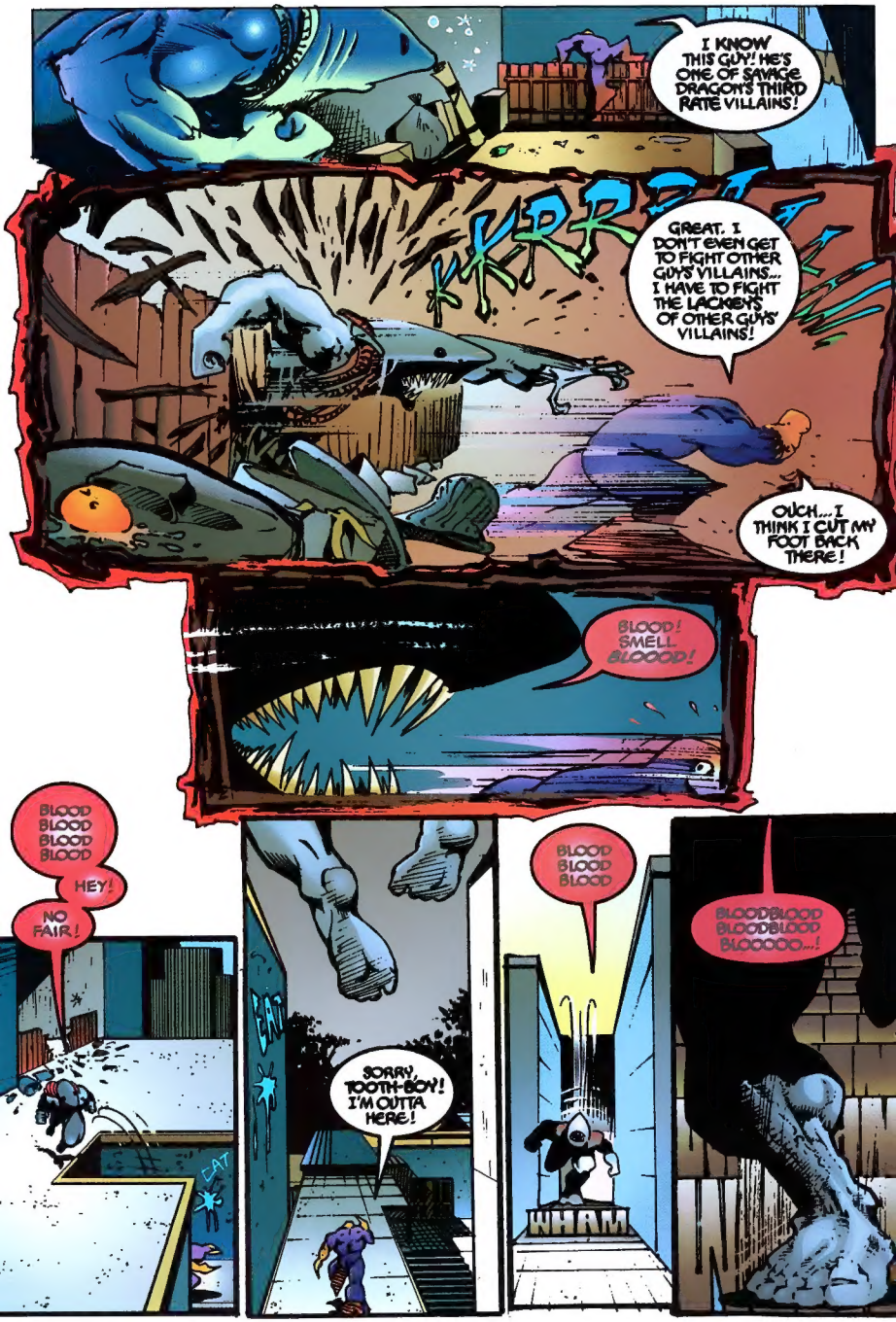

WHADDA YOU CARE, YOU... YOU... YOU...?
THAT'S M' PRONOUN, SON. DON'T WEAR IT OUT.
HEY, I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE THE DRAGON!
RIGHT. I'LL TAKE OVER NOW. YOU RUN ALONG. I'M IN PURSUIT OF A DANGEROUS PSYCHOPATH. THE OFFICERS AND I WILL TIDY UP HERE.
Hmm. THE COPS IN THIS TOWN SURE ARE SHORT!
BOY, THE OTHER KIDS'LL BE DISSED WHEN THEY FIND OUT WE MET TH' SAVAGE DRAGON!
YEAH, BUT MY PET OCELOT, NIETZSCHE, AN' ME WANNA KNOW WHO'S THE CRAZED PSYCHOPATH YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR...?

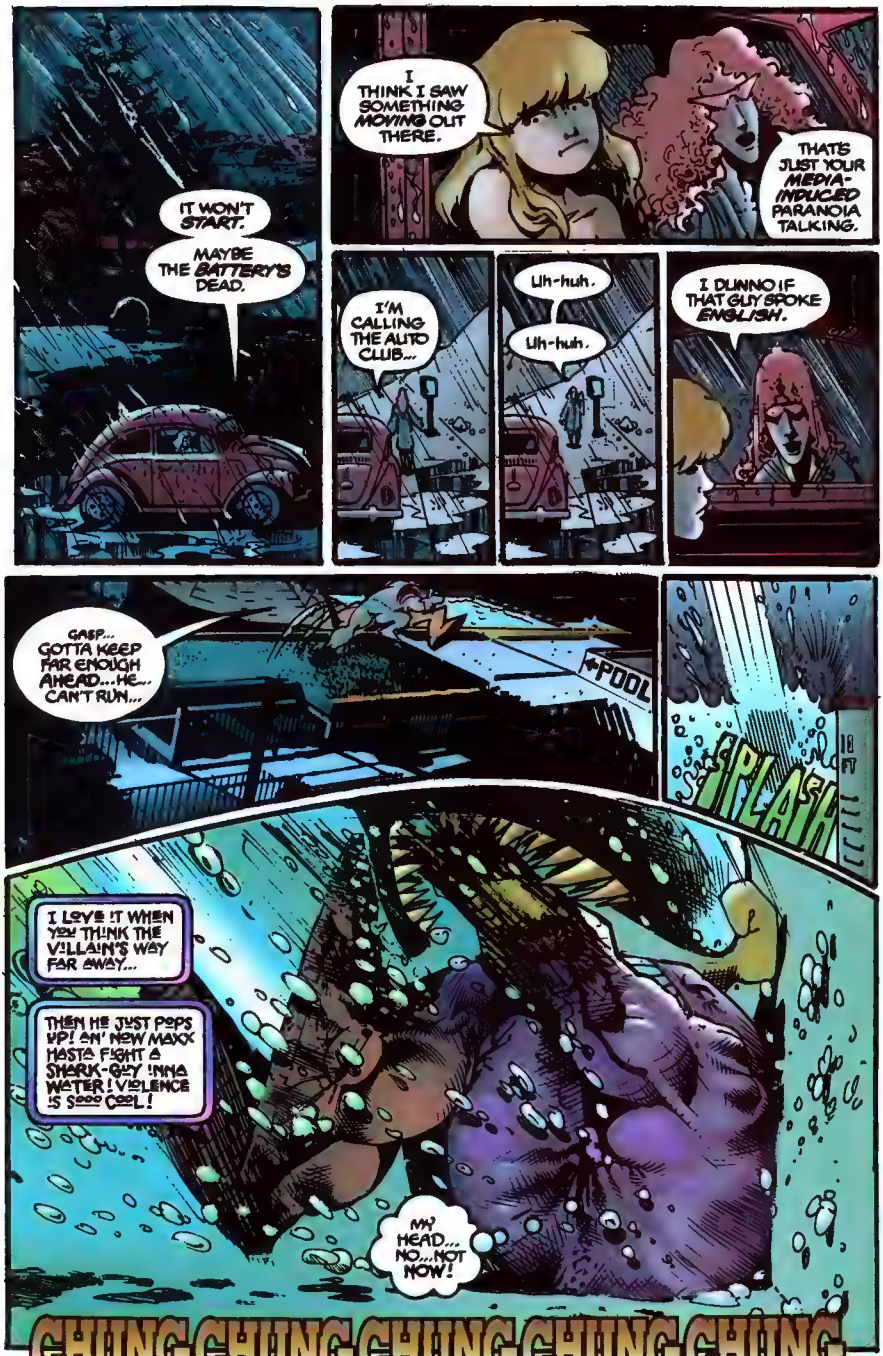
"HE'S A WHACKED-OUT BLOOD JUNKIE WITH A MEAN STREAK. THEY CALL HIM MAKO.
THERE'S THE PLACE...
"I PITY THE POOR SCHMUCK WHO COMES UP AGAINST HIM ALONE..."
HELLO DINNER!
JEEZ! A LAND SHARK! THIS STUFF ALWAYS HAPPENS JUST AFTER I GLUE MY HANDS SHUT OVER MY CLAWS! I HATE THAT!
RED DRAGON
PHOTO

WHAM!!
YOU DI ICKED ON PURPOSE, MALIVE-BOY! NOW I'M GONNA DO YOU SLOW!
SO, YOU REALLY WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN COUNTING "ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIONS" IN SILLY COP SHOWS?
I KNOW SOME OF THESE GROUPS ARE FANATICS, JULIE. BUT WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.
I MEAN ONLY A COUPLE HUGE CORPORATIONS OWN MOST OF THE MEDIA IN THIS COUNTRY AND THEY KEEP SHOVELING INCREASING AMOUNTS OF VIOLENCE AT US...

"ALMOST AS IF THEY KNOW WHAT THE WORST PART OF LIS WANTS..."
WHSSSH. HOT BABY! I LIKE TH!S!
I'LL SUCK THE BLOOD FROM YOUR JAGGED, SPURTING WOUNDS AND LAUGH!
AIN'T IT GREAT WHEN THEY TALK DIRTY?
BOOM!
YOUR FLESH WILL MELT OVER MY TEETH LIKE JELL-O!
SO HARD IT HITS YER TUMMY LIKE LIGHTN!NG?
HI, AGAIN!
AND WHEN THEY MAKE BIG NOSES WHEN THEY HIT, THAT MAKE THE SOLES OF YER FEET T!NGLE...
I'M TALKIN' T'YOU FROM INSIDE JULIE'S HEAD. T'LL I GET MY OWN BACK.
TH!S IS WHERE SHE KEEPS ALL THE STUFF SHE LIKES THAT AIN'T NICE!
UUUGH. WHERE...?
GOTTA RUN!
BRUTAL...
...AN!MAL...
...!NST!NCTS!
LIKE THE SPITTLE RUNN!NG DOWN THE BAD GUY'S TEETH, AND THEY'RE ALL POINTY AND UNEVEN! MAKES ME HOT!
DYIN' TIME!
HE'S STILL ALIVE?


AN' HERE'S WHERE TH' HERO IS TRAPPED!
THE EVIL VILLAIN IS UNSTOPPABLE!
LOOK HOW STRONG HE IS! HOW POWERFUL!
"FIGHT BACK!" WE SCREAM! "DON'T JUST TAKE IT! FIGHT BACK!"
DON'T IT MAKE Y'FEEL ALL FUNNY AND EXCITED?
!
MAYBE THIS'LL STOP HIM!
I GOTTA FIGHT BACK SOMEHOW!
BOY! LOOK IT HOW TENSE AN' RENDERED TH' HERO'S MUSCLES ARE! I'M REALLY GETTING INTO THIS!
SPROING
IF PEOPLE WANT VIOLENCE, THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO STOP THEM!
MAYBE. BUT WE CAN AT LEAST LET THEM KNOW HOW MUCH VIOLENCE SWIRLS AROUND THEM ALL THE TIME...LIKE BLOBS IN THE AIR!
I LIKE YOUR HAIR UP LIKE THAT, BY THE WAY.
GEE, IT'S STARTING TO RAIN....MAYBE WE SHOULD GO IN.

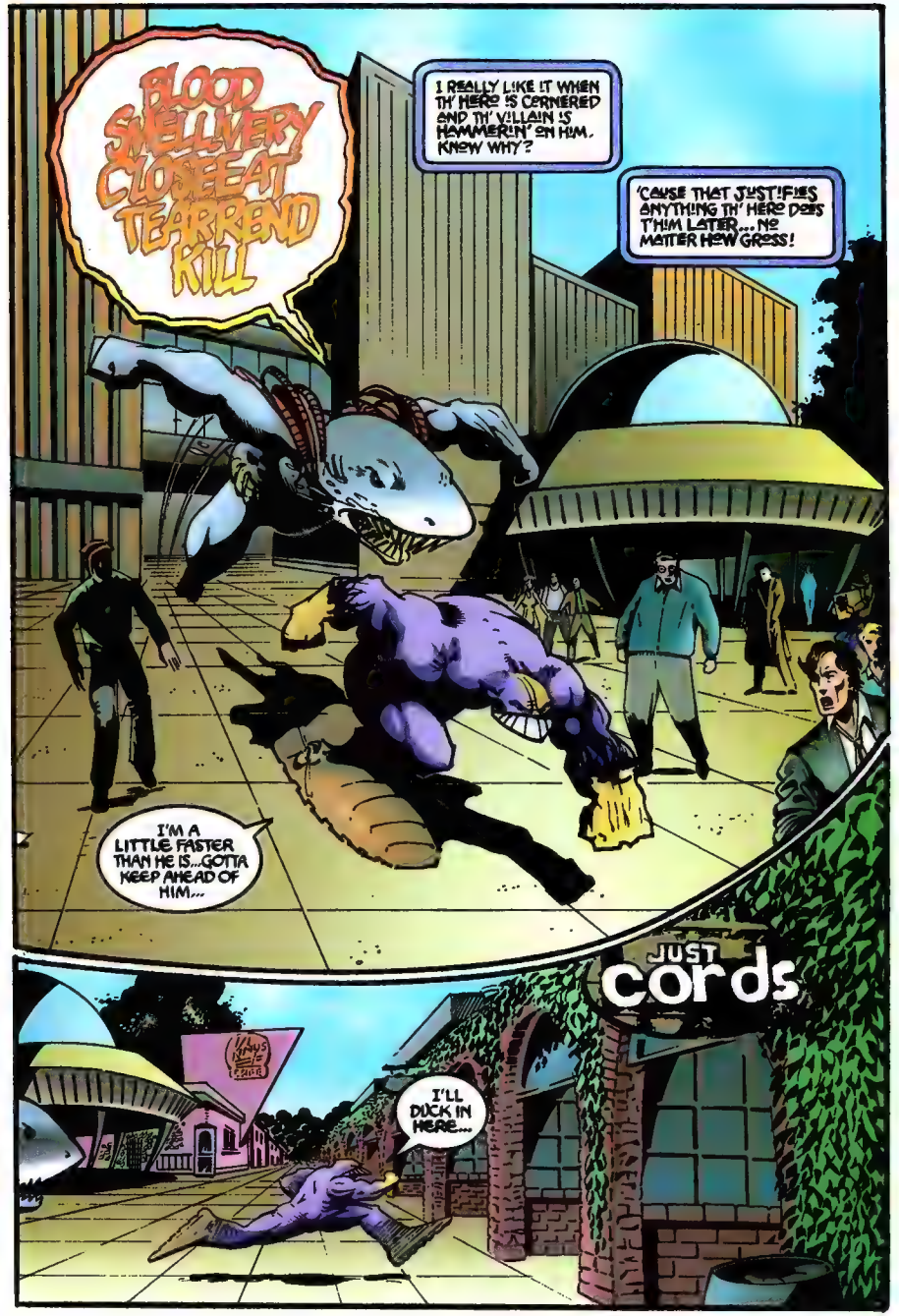

I KNOW THIS GUY! HE'S ONE OF SAVAGE DRAGON'S THIRD RATE VILLAINS!
KRRRAK!
GREAT. I DON'T EVEN GET TO FIGHT OTHER GUYS' VILLAINS... I HAVE TO FIGHT THE LACKEYS OF OTHER GUYS' VILLAINS!
OUCH... I THINK I CUT MY FOOT BACK THERE!
BLOOD! SMELL BLOOOD!
BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD
HEY!
NO FAIR!
EAT
EAT
SORRY, TOOTH-BOY! I'M OUTTA HERE!
BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD
WHAM
BLOODBLOOD BLOODBLOOD BLOOOOO...!


IT WON'T START.
MAYBE THE BATTERY'S DEAD.
I THINK I SAW SOMETHING MOVING OUT THERE.
THAT'S JUST YOUR MEDIA-INDUCED PARANOIA TALKING.
I'M CALLING THE AUTO CLUB...
Uh-huh.
Uh-huh.
I DUNNO IF THAT GUY SPOKE ENGLISH.
GASP... GOTTA KEEP FAR ENOUGH AHEAD... HE... CAN'T RUN...
POOL
SPLASH
18 FT
I LOVE IT WHEN YOU THINK THE VILLAIN'S WAY FAR AWAY...
THEN HE JUST POPS UP! AN' NOW MAXX HASTA FIGHT A SHARK-GUY INNA WATER! VIOLENCE IS SOOO COOL!
MY HEAD... NO... NOT NOW!
CHUNG CHUNG CHUNG CHUNG CHUNG

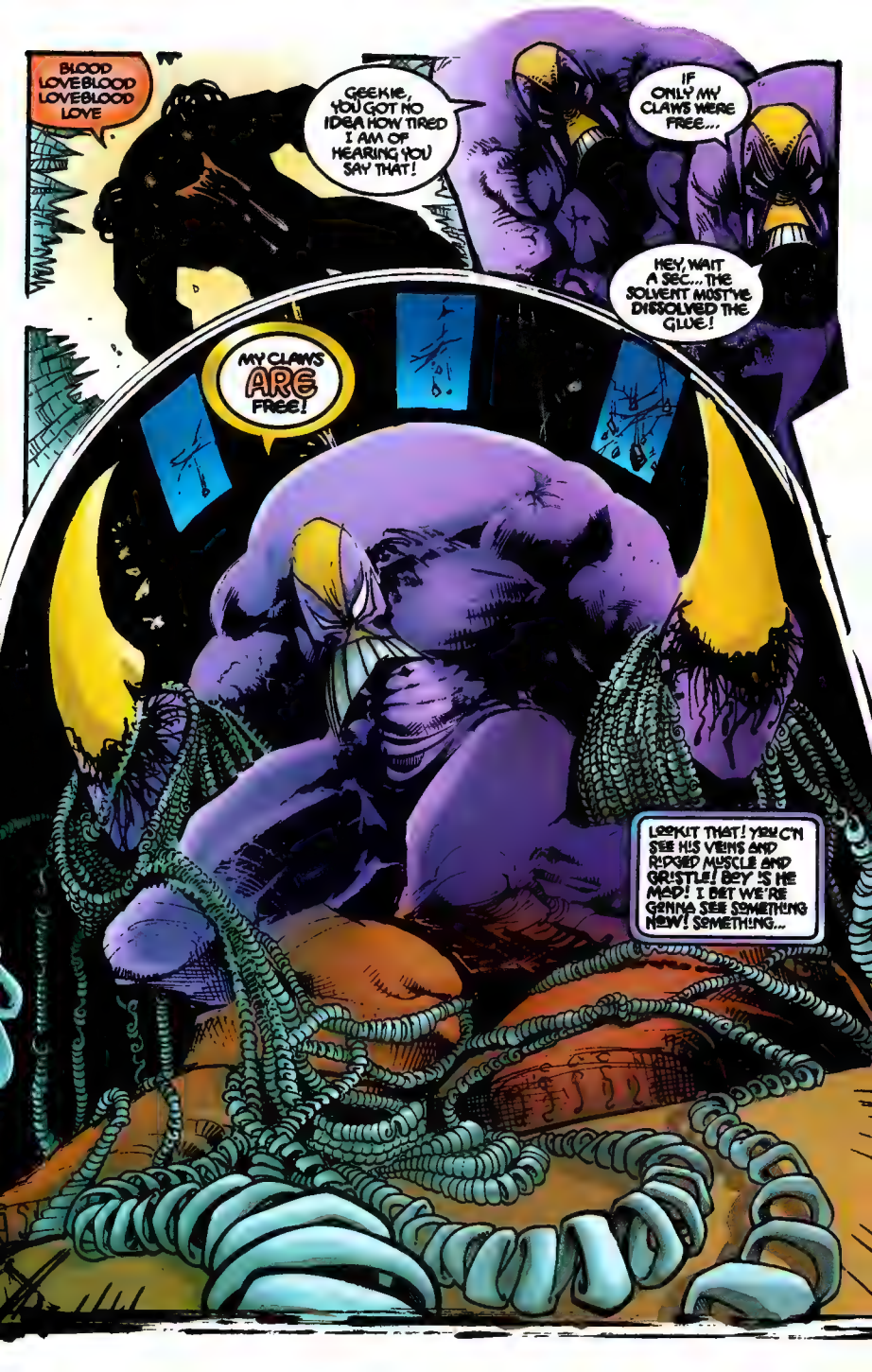
I AM THE JUNGLE QUEEN!
RULER OF THIS WORLD!
SHE HAS DARK HAIR! I THOUGHT SHE WAS A BLOND...?
AN' HOW COME SHE LOOKS LIKE A BAD PAPERBACK COVER?
I DUNNO. THIS IS YOUR DREAM, MAXX!
SO HOW COME YOUR HAIR IS BLACK NOW?
AND IF YOU'RE A LEOPARD QUEEN, WHERE'S YOUR LEOPARD?
I HAVE BEEN CHANGED. CRUELTY AND PAIN HAVE CHANGED ME.
AND MY LEOPARD IS DEAD.

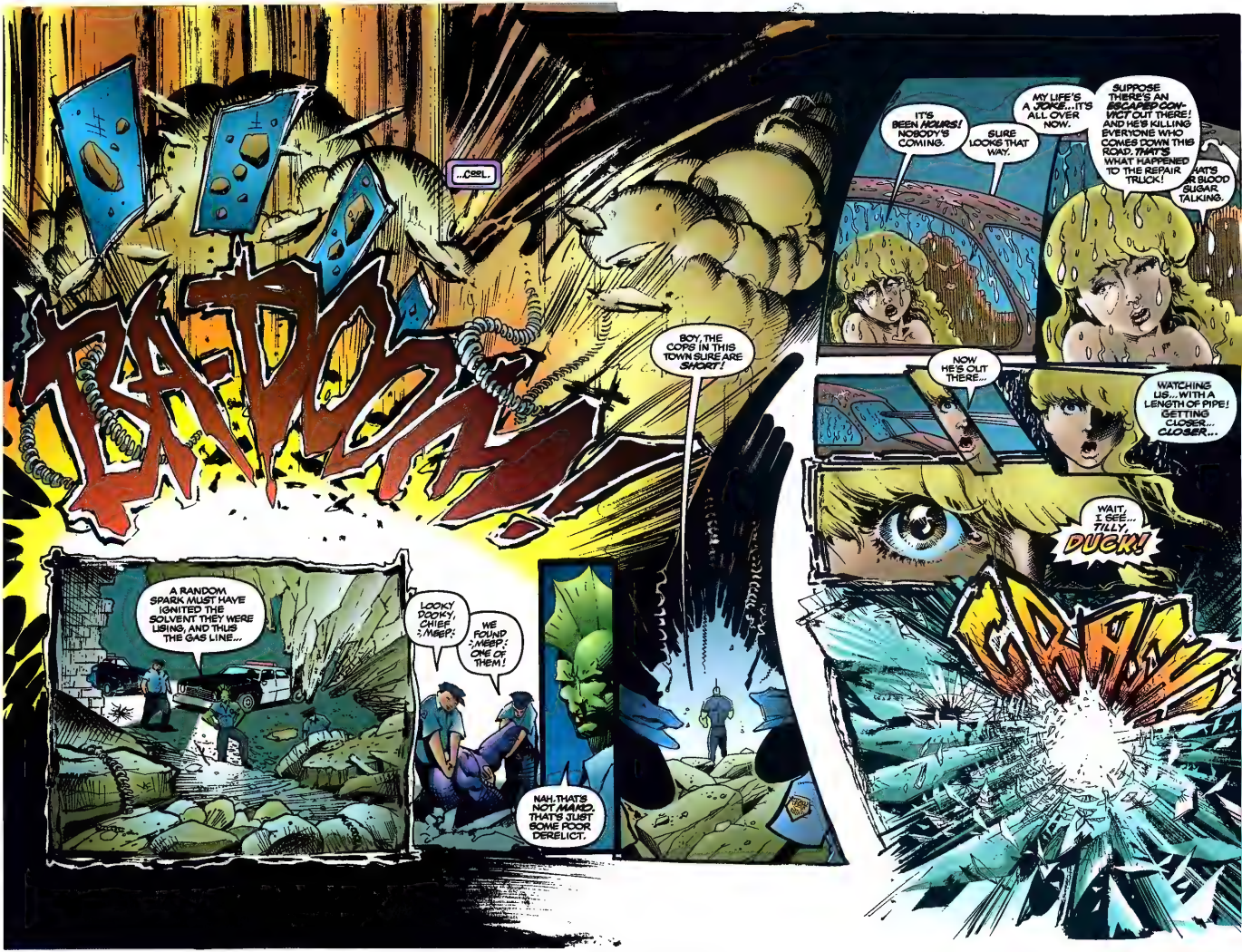
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GREAT? WHEN THE HERO AND VILLAIN ARE BOTH REALLY MESSED UP. LIKE ALMOST TO DEATH, Y'KNOW?
I WAS LUCKY LAST TIME... IF HE LANDS ON ME THIS TIME I'LL BE CRUSHED!
UHHH... I'M BACK.
I REALLY HATE THIII~!
GUNCH!
BLOOD.
RIP TEAR RENDSUCK KILL BLOOD KILL
BLOOD SMELL CLOSE GOOD GOTTA HAVE IT
RIGHT. LIKE THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.
BLOOD!
BLOOD BLOOD!
BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD!
BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD!

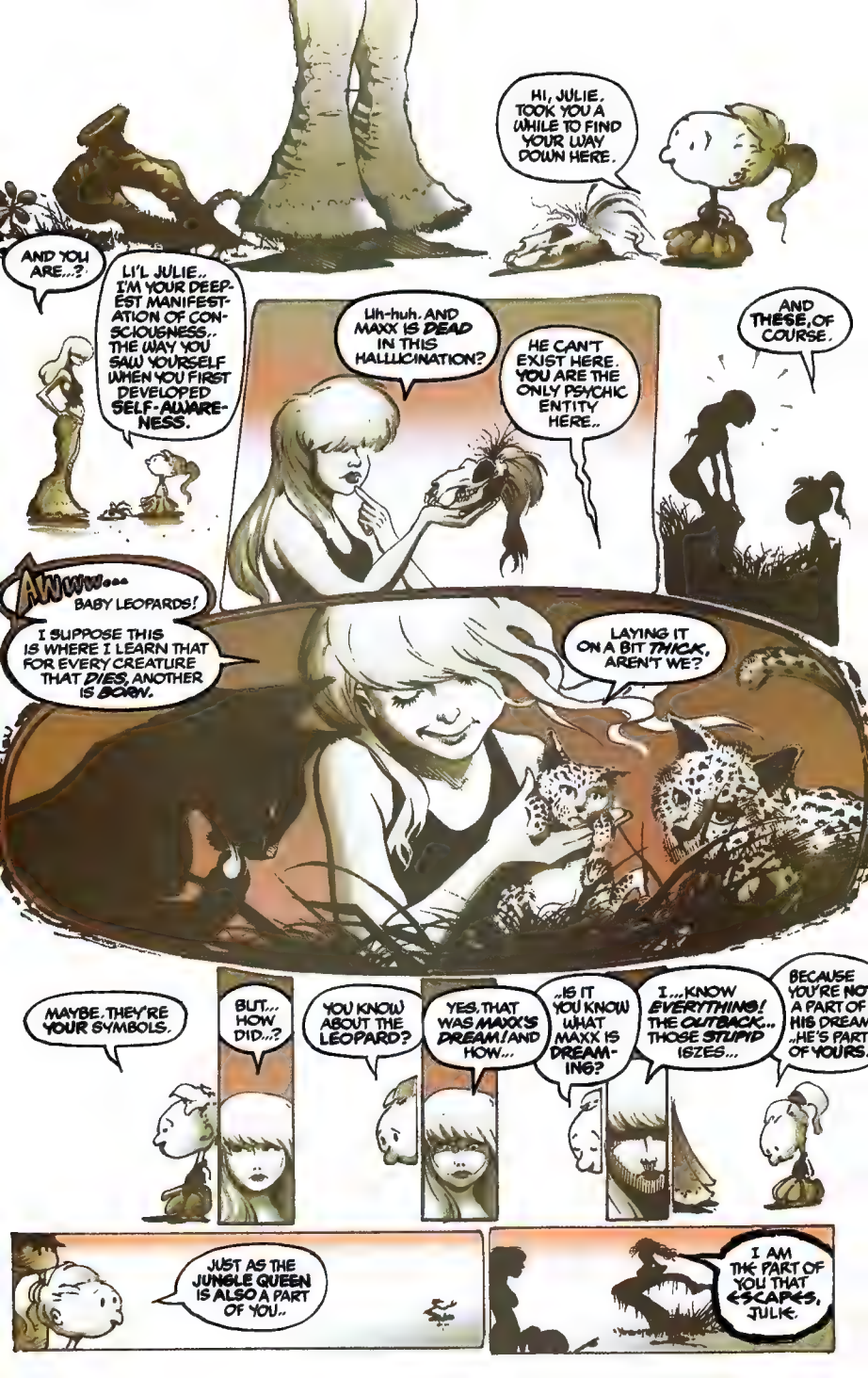
OKAY, SO MAYBE HE'S NOT A TOTAL LACKEY.
GNUUUHH! BLOOD CRUSH DRINK!
TOOCLOSE! TOOCLOSETOFAIL! KILLCRUSHH SUUCKK!
GREAT! SOUNDS LIKE THE CLOSER HE GETS TO HIS PREY, THE MORE STIMULATED HE IS!
I'M WAY, WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE HERE!

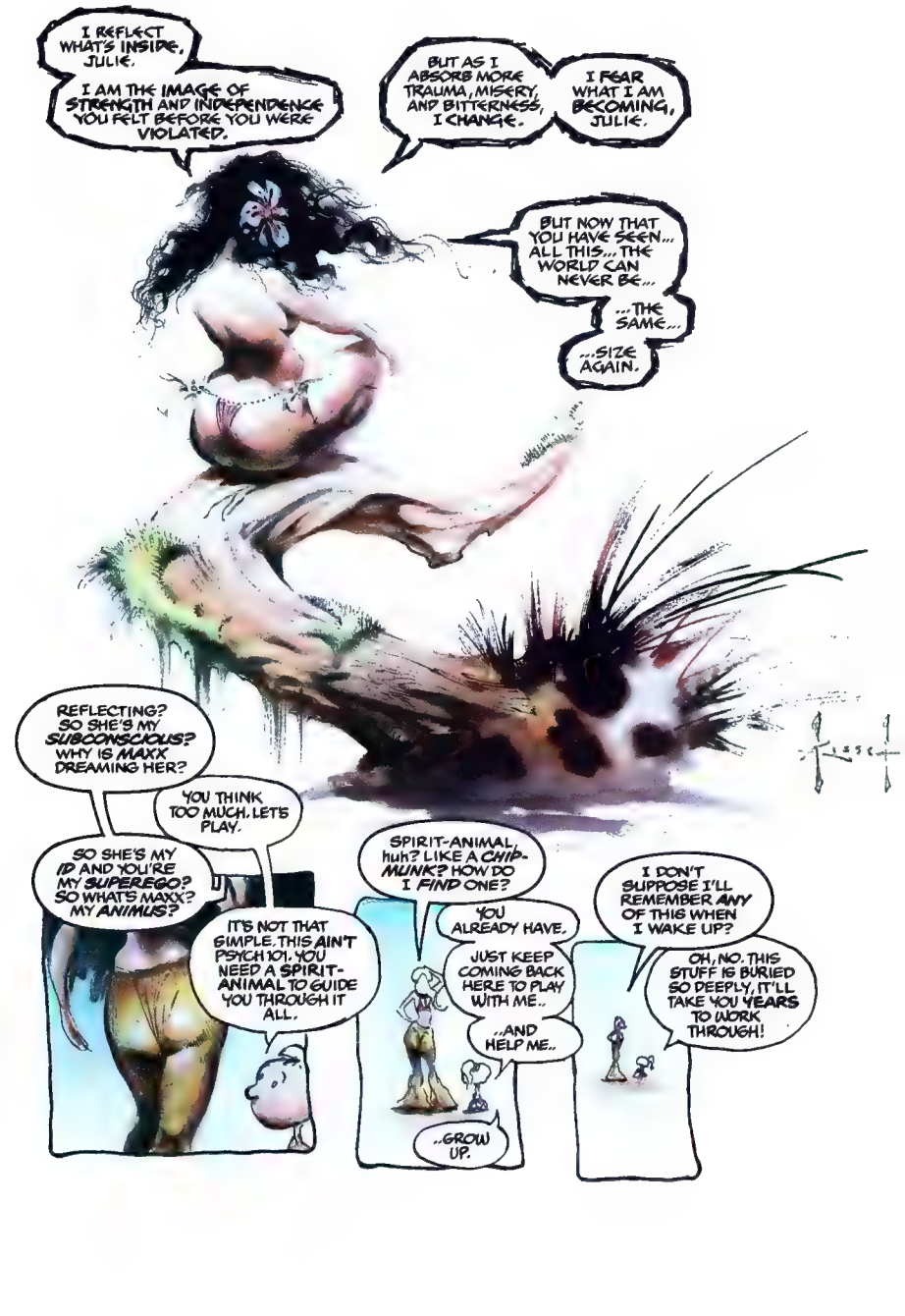

BLOOD SWELLVERY CLOSEEAT TEARREND KILL
I REALLY LIKE IT WHEN TH' HERO IS CORNERED AND TH' VILLAIN IS HAMMERIN' ON HIM. KNOW WHY?
'CAUSE THAT JUSTIFIES ANYTHING TH' HERO DOES T'HIM LATER... NO MATTER HOW GROSS!
I'M A LITTLE FASTER THAN HE IS...GOTTA KEEP AHEAD OF HIM...
JUST cords
I'LL DUCK IN HERE...

GAHH! TELEPHONE CORDS! EVERYWHERE! AND THAT SMELL!
IT'S SOLVENT. WE'RE CLEANING THE CORDS TODAY.
LISTEN! YOU GUYS GOTTA RUN! THERE'S A BIG HONKIN' SHARK-GUY ABOUT THREE HEARTBEATS BEHIND ME AND...
KRR
GAWD, I HATE MY LIFE...!


BLOOD LOVE BLOOD LOVE BLOOD LOVE
GEEKIE, YOU GOT NO IDEA HOW TIRED I AM OF HEARING YOU SAY THAT!
IF ONLY MY CLAWS WERE FREE...
HEY, WAIT A SEC... THE SOLVENT MUST'VE DISSOLVED THE GLUE!
MY CLAWS ARE FREE!
LOOKIT THAT! YOU C'N SEE HIS VEINS AND RIDGED MUSCLE AND GR!STLE! BOY 'S HE MAD! I BET WE'RE GONNA SEE SOMETH!NG NEW! SOMETH!NG...


...CEEL.
BOY, THE COPS IN THIS TOWN SURE ARE SHORT!
A RANDOM SPARK MUST HAVE IGNITED THE SOLVENT THEY WERE LISING, AND THUS THE GAS LINE...
LOOKY DOOKY, CHIEF :MEEP:
WE FOUND :MEEP: ONE OF THEM!
NAH. THAT'S NOT MARD. THAT'S JUST SOME POOR DERELICT.
IT'S BEEN HOURS! NOBODY'S COMING.
SURE LOOKS THAT WAY.
MY LIFE'S A JOKE... IT'S ALL OVER NOW.
SUPPOSE THERE'S AN ESCAPED CONVICT OUT THERE! AND HE'S KILLING EVERYONE WHO COMES DOWN THIS ROAD. THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REPAIR TRUCK!
THAT'S A BLOOD SUGAR TALKING.
NOW HE'S OUT THERE...
WATCHING US... WITH A LENGTH OF PIPE! GETTING CLOSER... CLOSER...
WAIT, I SEE... TILLY, DUCK!
CRAK!

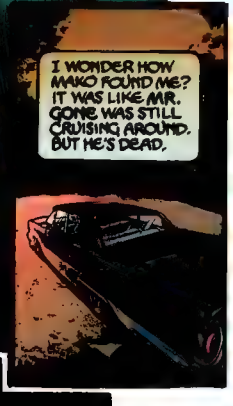

HI, JULIE. TOOK YOU A WHILE TO FIND YOUR WAY DOWN HERE.
AND YOU ARE...?
LI'L JULIE.. I'M YOUR DEEPEST MANIFESTATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS.. THE WAY YOU SAW YOURSELF WHEN YOU FIRST DEVELOPED SELF-AWARENESS.
Uh-huh. AND MAXX IS DEAD IN THIS HALLUCINATION?
HE CAN'T EXIST HERE. YOU ARE THE ONLY PSYCHIC ENTITY HERE..
AND THESE, OF COURSE.
AWWW... BABY LEOPARDS!
I SUPPOSE THIS IS WHERE I LEARN THAT FOR EVERY CREATURE THAT DIES, ANOTHER IS BORN.
LAYING IT ON A BIT THICK, AREN'T WE?
MAYBE. THEY'RE YOUR SYMBOLS.
BUT... HOW DID...?
YOU KNOW ABOUT THE LEOPARD?
YES. THAT WAS MAXX'S DREAM! AND HOW...
..IS IT YOU KNOW WHAT MAXX IS DREAMING?
I...KNOW EVERYTHING! THE OUTBACK... THOSE STUPID ISZES...
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT A PART OF HIS DREAM ..HE'S PART OF YOURS.
JUST AS THE JUNGLE QUEEN IS ALSO A PART OF YOU..
I AM THE PART OF YOU THAT ESCAPES, JULIE.


I REFLECT WHAT'S INSIDE, JULIE.
I AM THE IMAGE OF STRENGTH AND INDEPENDENCE YOU FELT BEFORE YOU WERE VIOLATED.
BUT AS I ABSORB MORE TRAUMA, MISERY, AND BITTERNESS, I CHANGE.
I FEAR WHAT I AM BECOMING, JULIE.
BUT NOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN... ALL THIS... THE WORLD CAN NEVER BE...
...THE SAME...
...SIZE AGAIN.
REFLECTING? SO SHE'S MY SUBCONSCIOUS? WHY IS MAXX DREAMING HER?
YOU THINK TOO MUCH. LET'S PLAY.
SO SHE'S MY ID AND YOU'RE MY SUPEREGO? SO WHAT'S MAXX? MY ANIMUS?
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. THIS AIN'T PSYCH 101. YOU NEED A SPIRIT-ANIMAL TO GUIDE YOU THROUGH IT ALL.
SPIRIT-ANIMAL, huh? LIKE A CHIPMUNK? HOW DO I FIND ONE?
YOU ALREADY HAVE.
JUST KEEP COMING BACK HERE TO PLAY WITH ME..
..AND HELP ME..
..GROW UP.
I DON'T SUPPOSE I'LL REMEMBER ANY OF THIS WHEN I WAKE UP?
OH, NO. THIS STUFF IS BURIED SO DEEPLY, IT'LL TAKE YOU YEARS TO WORK THROUGH!

SO THAT'S THE STORY. EVERYTHING'S ABOUT THE SAME...

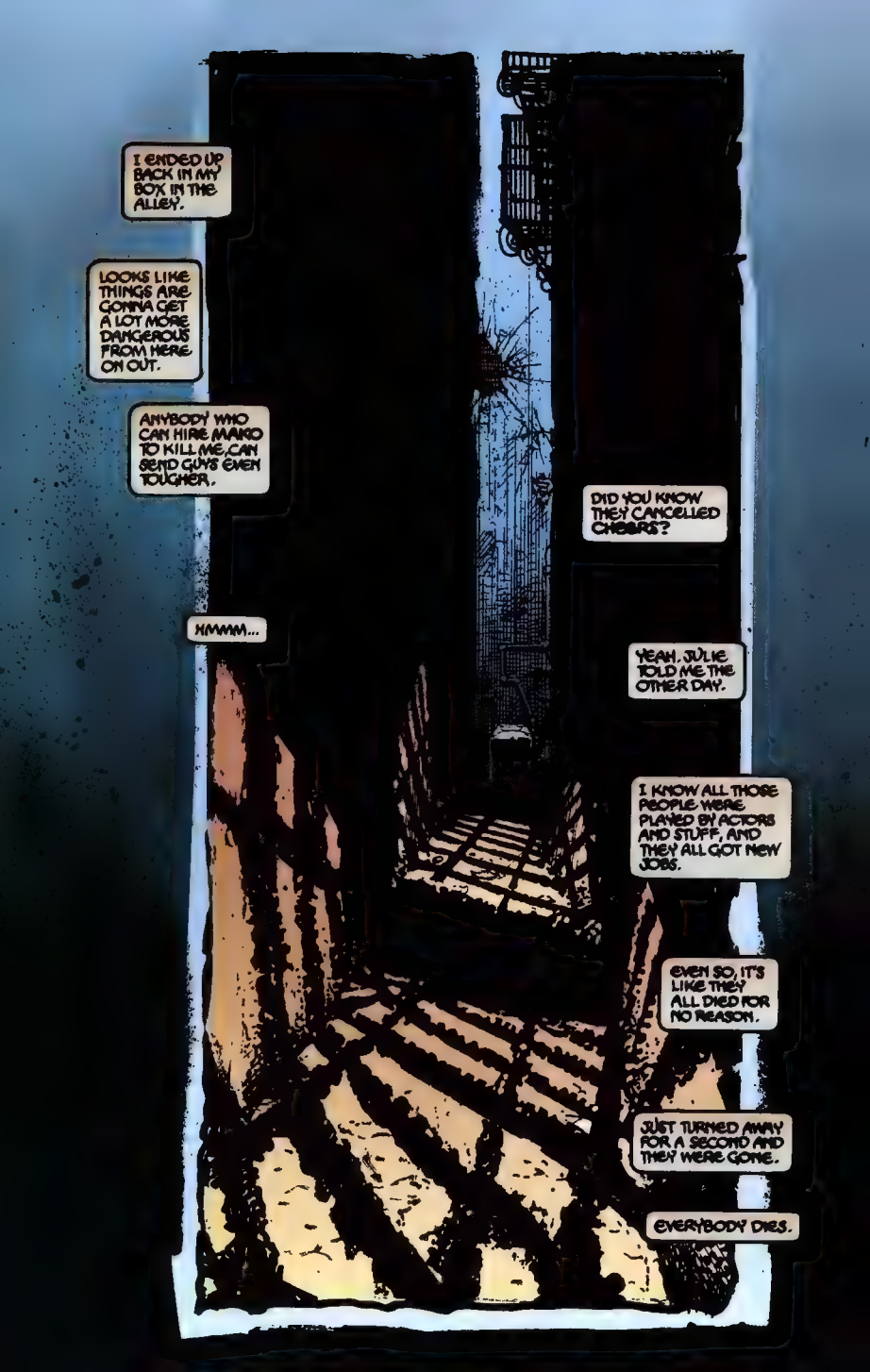
OH YEAH. THERE WAS A MANIAC THAT NIGHT. IT WAS THE IDIOT DRIVING THE TOW TRUCK, WHO KNOCKED A HOLE THROUGH THEIR WINDSHIELD.

FUNNY THING, JULIE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE A HEADACHE. AND SHE'S BEEN SLEEPING LIKE A BABY EVER SINCE.



OF COURSE, I WOKE UP IN A PATROL CAR FILLED WITH ISZES. THAT WAS BAD. I HAD TO BREAK A PANE OF BULLET PROOF GLASS TO ESCAPE.

SO, WHO KNOWS? I KNOW I DON'T.


I ENDED UP BACK IN MY BOX IN THE ALLEY.
LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE GONNA GET A LOT MORE DANGEROUS FROM HERE ON OUT.
ANYBODY WHO CAN HIRE MARO TO KILL ME, CAN SEND GUYS EVEN TOUGHER.
HMMM...
DID YOU KNOW THEY CANCELLED CHEERS?
YEAH. JULIE TOLD ME THE OTHER DAY.
I KNOW ALL THOSE PEOPLE WERE PLAYED BY ACTORS AND STUFF, AND THEY ALL GOT NEW JOBS.
EVEN SO, IT'S LIKE THEY ALL DIED FOR NO REASON.
JUST TURNED AWAY FOR A SECOND AND THEY WERE GONE.
EVERYBODY DIES.

The fan who signed himself "Name Withheld" in issue #3 got LOTS of mail. Fans called him a wuss, Neanderthal, son of a dung beetle, and pompous awipe. Heidi speaks:**

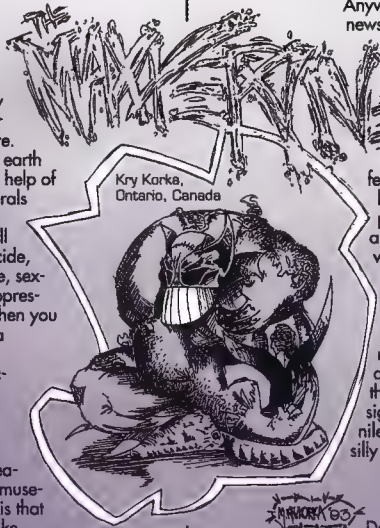
Dear Sam & Co:

First off, as everyone is probably aware, my name is spelled "MacDonald" despite what you may have read.

The letter in Maxx #4 from the "very proud, MALE MAXX fan, nice guy, extraordinaire, avant garde, neato keen, spiffy #$%@ with an attitude problem" is so doofus-esque that I have a hard time believing it's not a put on, but just in case it isn't, this is as good an opportunity as any to lay down some ground rules for what we're dealing with here.

"We males have run this earth very successfully without the help of feminists or those damn liberals for thousands of years."

Well, I suppose if you call thousands of years of genocide, slavery, religious intolerance, sexual, racial and economic oppression and war "successful," then you have a point. I don't think a world where a *Bosnia* or a *Somalia* can happen is "successful," myself.



"Are you aware of the reason women need their own museums and such? The reason is that no one, except for women like Madonna, have done anything that would measure up to what the men of this world have done."

Hm. Laying aside the contradiction inherent in this statement, Mr. MALE MAXX fan, are you aware of the fact that actually women HAVE excelled in every field which they've been permitted to enter? (Sappho predates Madonna by a few centuries, I believe.) I say permitted, because lest we forget, throughout recorded history, women have very systematically been denied the right to own property, the right to inherit, right to divorce, and in some societies, the right to live. (Check out the rate of female infanticide in China, for example.)

Of course, when women have been given a chance, their achievements have been as notable as men's-with the exception that women's accomplishments have been demeaned, diminished, ignored and , when a women hits on something really hot, appropriated by the nearest guy.(F'rinstance, male philosophers turned the study of medicine to "The Humors" which supposedly caused human illness. Meanwhile, female barber/ surgeon/ midwives relied on their knowledge of which plants actually worked as pain killers, contraceptives, medicines, and so on. This wisdom has come down to us as "Old Wives' Tales", a typical example of the trivialization of female achievements.)

Anyway, this is all old, old news, or should be. But I guess in a world where people can say the Holocaust didn't happen, you can't assume that the truth is going to get out. The facts of female repression throughout history are elementary compared to the Paglia/Faludi argument. (Even Paglia wouldn't argue that this repression exists; she'd argue over why.)

MALE MAXX fan says he's proud, but I guess not quite proud enough to actually sign his name. But then, who WOULD want to sign his name to such a juvenile, ignorant and just plain silly letter?

Sincerely,
Heidi MacDonald

Dear Sam,

I'm impressed that you managed to condense three of my letters into one cohesive package {see Issue #2 of Maxx Traxx.} But...(you knew there was a "but" coming, didn't you?)

My name is "Augie," short for "August." A-U-G-I-E. Got that?

In conclusion: A-U-G-I-E.
Augie De Blieck, Jr.
North Haledon, New Jersey

Sorry, Aug.

Dear Sam,

I noticed the dialogue credits for Maxx #4 were divided between you and Bill Messner-Loebs. Man, what a tender story. I don't know which of you deserves the credit, but someone needs plenty

of recognition for this one. Damn fine work. I'm impressed.

Sincerely,
Matt Ingram
Cedartown, Georgia

Everyone at Maxx,

First of all—The Maxx is great! I read it every month and it just gets better. My favorite issue, though, has to be #4, and I am writing this letter to thank you for turning my day from dark to light.

Right before I got around to reading the latest issue of The Maxx, I was feeling very depressed. I felt like no one understood me or my actions and words which I knew in my heart were morally right. I felt lonely and confused. Also, being a part of a step-family for five years , there are still times when I feel like no one really wants me here, and that hurts a lot.

To sum it all up, I felt like running out in the middle of the busiest street and letting the fastest car have its way with me. But then I read Maxx #4...

I can't honestly say that issue #4 saved my life — I don't think I could ever take my own life because my conscience always kicks in and gives me a million and one reasons not to. I can say, however, that little Sarah made me feel a lot better about things and made me a much stronger person. Oh, and the Isz dressed as car-jackers (MEEP!) made me laugh my head off.

In closing, I'd just like to say that I hope we see a lot more of Sarah (and the Isz.) The Maxx story may be pretty hard to comprehend overall, but I think Issue #4 will be one that Maxx fans will have no trouble understanding.

Thank you,
Michelle

Dear Kieth and Company,

I and my partner B.J. Ramsey have co-founded the Ret'qark'nite Fan Club. Anybody wishing to join the clan can write to me.

Chris Proft
1918 Amelia Avenue
San Pedro, California 90731

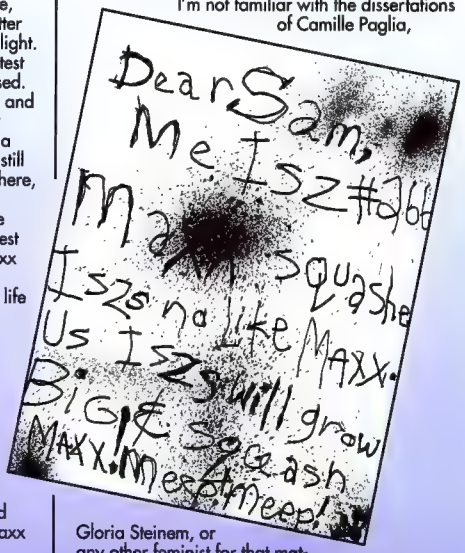
I didn't print this guy's whole letter. If you want to see his whole letter, write to him.

Jurgen Burmann, Mexico

Dear Sam,

Yours is the only letter page I have written to aside from Groo-Grams (and no, I don't expect to a get a signed Groo paperback since I've seen "so dumb" stuff in the pages of Savage Dragon and, of course, Maxx #4), but the outstanding Sarah story revealed in the fourth issue just plunked me down in front of the word processor and made me write.

I'm not familiar with the dissertations of Camille Paglia,



Gloria Steinem, or any other feminist for that matter, so I am unable to analyze the story with any feminist doctrine in mind. Therefore, I will just cut to the chase; it was a spanking good read. I hope to see more of Sarah in future issues. She speaks for a lot of people trying to fit into what can only be described as a F'd up world. Such creative storytelling and strong female characters are sadly missing in comics today. Image should consider themselves lucky to have you and Mr. Loebs putting out such fine material under their banner.

What is next for Julie and Maxx? I am interested to see how the multi-planed reality they exist on is resolved. It is becoming increasingly clear that these realities are not just products of The Maxx's imagination, since Julie has become too inextricably tied into the whole Leopard Queen thing just to be part of his fantasy. Is she the dominating force behind the varying levels of (un)reality? Has her escapism from childhood traumas become so intense that Pangaea actually became a physically accessible manifestation? In Issue Four, Sarah touched a nerve when she accused Julie of only being able to sustain relationships if she was the controlling force. In creating a world in which The Maxx becomes an integral part, she becomes something of an omniscient matriarch. It could be she needs The Maxx in order to sustain Pangaea. On the other hand, I'm probably way off base. In the real world, so to speak, she seems to be much too caring to be capable of such

manipulation and puppeteering. Besides, she fell victim to an Isz in the fridge in Issue Two. Hey, but what about the Gone guy! I didn't even think about how he fits into the scheme of things. Maybe Mr. Gone is running the show, or is he just a victim too? Didn't Julie shave him a little too close at the end of Issue Two, thus eliminating him from one of the lesser planes? I give up. Thanks for putting up with my ramblings, and giving me some cool characters that I can actually care about.

Faithfully,
Neil Sutton
Aurora,
Ontario,
Canada

Dear Sam,

One suggestion I have is that you have Maxx go absolutely nuts, killin' anyone in his sight except his girlfriend Julie! But then he goes back to normal and everyone and his uncle goes after him.

Sincerely,
Gavin Alarcon
Azusa, California

Cool.

Dear Sam,

What's with Maxx, anyway? All Maxx-heads know he's about 230 lb. In issues #3 and #4, he looks like a 900 lb. nosetackle who would be lucky to fit through a garage door!

Jeremy Douglas
Ben Lomond, California

Large Maxx = more space=fewer backgrounds = less work.
Can you say, "Hack?"

Dear Mr. Kieth and Mr. Loebs,

By the end of this school year, I will be certified as an English teacher. I have one more semester of taking classes at the University of Iowa. Today one of my instructors asked this question: "What is good literature?" One of my classmates made the comment that comic books were not literature and only escapism. Being a closet-reader of comic books, I stayed quiet. What would my colleagues think if they learned that I read comic books in my spare time?

Reluctantly, I trudged over to my favorite comic store. Maybe I should give up this escapism and spend my time reading the classics by Faulkner, Hemmingway, and Fitzgerald. Don't get me wrong. I love these three authors, and The Great Gatsby has to be one of my favorite books of all time. But, as I've come closer to becoming an English teacher, I've been feeling guilty reading "non-literature." I went through the comic books, picking out the titles I read. I then came to issue four of The Maxx. I had read the first three issues. They were okay, but money's been tight so I've been trying to cut back on how much I spend on comic books a week. After a few minutes, I decided I would stay on to issue five and it was only $1.95 so I picked it up. My colleagues would probably laugh at me for picking up a comic book about a big purple guy.

I didn't get around to reading it until after classes when I returned to my apartment. The opening page grabbed me as a good piece of literature does. This was terrific writing. Such quiet sadness to the prose, and the pictures complemented the prose quite well. By the end of the issue, I was trying to hold back the tears. After reading this issue, I felt bad that I didn't stand up for the comic book medium. I'm still not comfortable with coming out of the closet, but this issue has reinforced my belief that comic books can aspire to the status of literature with good writing, and art that complements good writing. It is only when the writing is up to par or even surpasses excellent art that a comic book becomes a piece of literature. This is great literature. I only hope that future issues will be of the same or of a better caliber than issue four. Great job, guys. Thanks for making me remember why I read comic books. Maybe someday I will even come out of the closet.

Sincerely,
B. Filip Peters
Iowa City, Iowa

Dear Sir,

You know, ever since you started printing your awesome comic on nice, glossy pages, it's been a lot harder to rip up.

Loyal fan,
Ryan Campeau
Scio, Oregon

Yeah, I noticed.

Dear Sam Kieth,

I have to agree with the Total Maxx Fan from Santa Barbara in #4. Who is Frazetta? More importantly, who is Paglia? I gather they're feminists or something, but I am wondering about this too. And I don't have any wet noodles around right now, so you're going to have to answer this question.

A Maxx fan who doesn't want to sign her name because she's too embarrassed to admit she's clueless on this Paglia thing.

Sam Kieth,

OK...To all you "Meeps" that don't know what Frazetta is...Sit up and listen. It's a cheese, made only in Brooklyn, by this guy named Frank, since the year 1928. So stop asking...

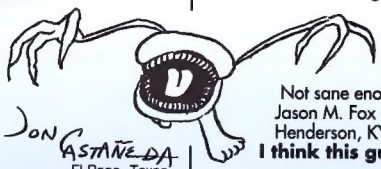
From Shane in Canada
(No, I don't live in an igloo.)

Dear Sam,

When I read that Total Maxx Fan had never heard of Frank Frazetta, I screamed! Who's never heard of Frazetta? Hey, Total! Ever heard of Santa? Odin? Zeus? I liken Mr. Frazetta up there with these three guys (all of them follow the Big Guy, God Himself, of course, with Barry Sanders in a close sixth.)

Bye.
The Sandman
(alias The Real
Phlegm Lord!)

Barry Sanders?



Mr. Kieth,

I think you should pulverize that idiot who asked who Frazetta is. Doesn't he realize what a fool he is? I also think you should come to my house for dinner some time. My mom said you can come over and stay the night if you like. She fixes really good lasagna. If you come, make sure Bill comes too. My mom thinks he's just an adorable young man.

Ken Wiatrek
Pasadena, Texas

Dear Sam,

I have heard of Pangaea. It is what scientists call the single land mass that makes up the seven continents today. This land mass was present around 200 million years ago, when dinosaurs were still around. Could The Maxx be a time-traveller from the past? Maybe reincarnation?

Sincerely,
Mark Blicharz
East Hampton, CT

No.

Sam,

I have been thinking about something. There are rumors that Jim, Todd, and Rob (Tha' Big Guys) have been working on movie deals and action figure deals and such things. Not that I wouldn't mind having a 17-inch, Battle Poseable, Kung-Fu grip Maxx figure with thirteen action-packed accessories sitting on my headboard, staring me in the face at night...I mean, who doesn't want that, right?

What I'm saying is, Maxx is destined for greater things! Now think, Sam! What (A) is the greatest achievement a fictional character can achieve in the mainstream world, and (B) has Maxx always been a longtime supporter of?

The answer is Pez! To truly achieve greatness, Maxx NEEDS his own Pez dispenser!

Look back at all of the great achievers that have reached Pezdom! Spiderman, Batman, Charlie Brown, The Truck (er...bad example), Garfield. A Pez dispenser is the ultimate sign of greatness!

So, Sam, get on the horn and call up the Pez Company. Tell them that you want a Pez dispenser. Tell them you want only strawberry packages to come with it. The world is crying out..."SAM!!! GIVE US OUR MAXX PEZ DISPENSER!!!"

While you're at it, you could make a Julie dispenser...with a bell bottom! Or maybe an ISZ Pez Dispenser (try saying that ten times fast.)

Sam...Bear down...Get your priorities straight...Get us a Maxx Pez Dispenser. And when they hit the shelves, I'll be the first in line!

Not sane enough to write a real letter,
Jason M. Fox
Henderson, KY

I think this guy's on to something.

Does the Spotted Seussadon have anything to do with Dr. Seuss?

Kevin Regalado
Alhambra, CA

Hopefully we peaked out on Seuss references last issue.

Dear Sam,

Maxx and Dragon are my favorite comics to read. I found myself reading the letter pages in issue #4. What the "banshee crap" is going on? What's with all this feminist confusion? It's a comic book, for goodness sake. Girls and guys writing in with all their sexist ideas. Why are they reading so deeply into this comic book? They are clearly pulling way more out of the comic than is in it. And you just sit back and feed it by printing the letters and adding little two-cent remarks to perk the controversy. "Julie is a weird girl that has most likely had something awful happen to her in her childhood to make her act..." — yeah, right! Boring-lame! Julie is cool. Bellbottoms (on girls) are freakin' cool. Maybe she likes being weird and different. I do, and so do some of my friends. That's how we escape the real world to the fantasy wonderland of our minds. And this is what comics are all about — not feminist liberals or child molestation. If you want that, there are about 50 talk shows on TV everyday on those subjects. Who cares if Julie is a feminist? What comic book readers care about is Maxx being their hero!

Sincerely,
Ivan Steel
Fort Myers, FL

Dear Sam,

I was reading the letter column in #4 and someone mentioned that Lapin (you had one "p" too many) means "rabbit." It hit me like an anvil. There is a Br'er Rabbit from Disney comics, right? And isn't he a Cajun, like Gambit, who mixes English and French? This would explain why Rabbit was changed to Lapin. Here is my conclusion: The Maxx is actually Gambit disguised as a mutant rabbit (not Usagi Yojimbo!) disguised as The Maxx. I'm either exactly right or very, very stupid.

Matthew Bingham
Pointe-Claire, Quebec,
Canada

I think you were closer with Usag: Yojimbo.

Kieth,

Read Maxx #4, dug it, gotta critique it. For someone who obviously has never experienced the feelings of what it is to desire suicide, you took a good stab at it. Fact is, it ain't quite that simple.

You said that it was merely a waiting thing for life to change. Sorry, but you don't arrive at suicide overnight. I don't care what anyone says — anyone who ever tries it has carried it with him for a long time.

Fact is, someone in this desperate situation knows all too well that waiting is the problem, not the solution. Waiting doesn't change a damn thing.

Change is the only situation. Of course, you cannot have change without the knowledge of how to change. That is where most people get stuck — you want to help tell the person how to change.

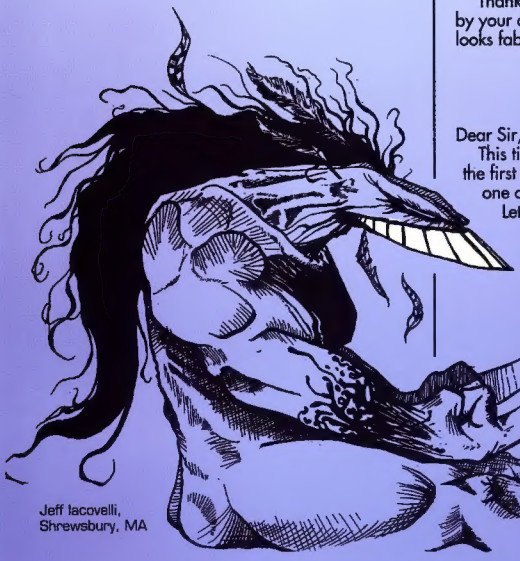
The point is, it is impossible to wait for life to change. It will never happen. You must get off your ass and make the change happen. Waiting plays no part in it.

Believe me, I know. I think of it every day.

On a higher note, I totally dig Julie. You ever change anything about her, and I will personally kick your sold-out a**.

If there is anyone out there at all that can even remotely identify with me, I am curious to hear from you. My name and address are below.

Adam Chance
RD#1 Box 1046
Brodbecks,
PA 17329

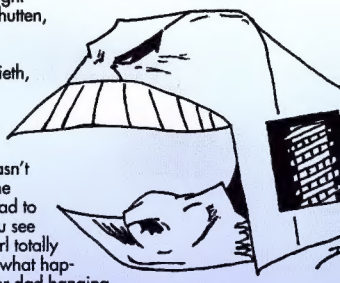


Jeff Iacovelli,
Shrewsbury, MA

Dear Mr. Kieth,

Was The Maxx modelled after a crescent wrench, or is the resemblance coincidental?

Dwight "Doc" Courtwright
Gnadenhutten, Ohio



Dear Mr. Kieth,

When I picked up issue #4 of The Maxx. I wasn't ready for the reaction I had to it. First, you see this poor girl totally freaked by what happened to her dad hanging out in underpasses. As if knowing about her father wasn't enough, here comes "Mom." (For those of you who don't know what I'm talking about, go pick up issue #4. The woman is too much for mere words!)

So, what's a girl to do? Befriend The Maxx, of course. What really attracted me to the story, however, was its ending. Sarah could've easily just given up and blown herself away. Instead, she drops the gun. The End. Not to her problems, but to her hating her life so much that she considered ending it. Sure, she still hangs in the underpasses, but at least it's without a firearm.

Thanks again for a great issue accompanied by your classic artwork. By the way, I think Julie looks fabulous in those bellbottoms.

You go Girl!
Respectfully,
Michelle M.

Dear Sir,

This time you've gone too far. A&BA (yeah, the first B is reversed, you fool!) was and still is one of the world's foremost rock and roll acts. Let me stress that this is in the present tense — these Swedish Pop-Gods are still performing, and they sound great. I don't see Led Zeppelin

doin' any shows lately, and even when they were, they sucked d***. Stairway to Fraggle-Rock, my eye!

Aloha and Adios,
Zsolt Gaspar
Northbrook, IL

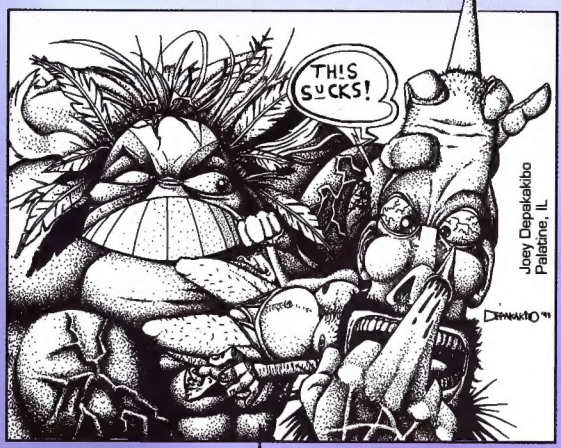
Dear Mr. Kieth,

I am deeply upset that you made the statement that ABBA is uncool. If ABBA's so uncool, why have cool people like Erasure and U2 covered ABBA in their respective albums and concerts. Also, I don't know if you are aware of this or not, but in Singapore, ABBA's records sell better than Michael Jackson, Guns n' Roses, or whoever else sells a lot of records these days. Now, you wouldn't want to be alienating all your fans in Singapore, would you? I believe it may even be a federal offense to speak poorly of ABBA in Sweden, so let's not be so hasty about the things we say, all right?

Ryan Schofield
Marion, IL

Dear Mr. Kieth,

I am now giving you a chance to retract a statement you made in issue #4, in order to save yourself face. You seem to be under the impression that ABBA is not cool. WRONG!!! I think most people secretly like ABBA, but are too scared to admit it. You are not helping the situation by callin them "uncool!!!"



Sincerely,
Stacie Ponder
Groton, CT

I'm trying really hard to get upset about this...really I am...

Dear Mr. Sam Kieth,

My 14-year-old son Scott buys all your Maxx books. He is a Maxx nut. He begged me to read Maxx #4 'cause he says he and Sarah have lots in common. I did. I cried. I feel very sorry for Sarah and Scott. I said some of those things to Scott that Sarah's mom said to Sarah, and I feel real bad.

Scott sees his dad as a pal and me as bad 'cause I left his "dear ol' dad." Scott doesn't think about how I worked two jobs for years so we could have a house to live in, and his dad never did work a job. I don't mean to whine — lots of folks have it rough. Maybe when Scott and Sarah grow up, they can love and forgive their moms and know how much their moms love them and went through for them. I used to feel real bad and guilty, but God knows and I know I did my very best to love and raise Scott. Ever since I had him, I just wanted to stay home and be with him, but I had to pay bills and did not have time left to be Scott's buddy after work, due to fixing food and doing clean clothes. I just didn't have any energy left to play.

I'm sorry for Sarah's mom. I bet she feels cheated and broken-hearted, too. Someday I hope Scott and Sarah can know their moms loved them with all they had to give (their lives.)

Thank you.
Scott's mom
So. Sacramento, CA

Dear Mr. Kieth,

I am writing to tell you how incredible issue #4 was. I am sure there are many people who feel like Sarah did in the beginning of the story, and more importantly, how she feels at the end. But after I read the story, I found myself wondering if, through some cosmic phenomena, this issue was written for me and me alone. While there are lots of differences between the events of my life and Sarah's, the basics are all there: a screwed-up family life, low self-esteem, the inability to relate to the adults around me, and, of course, the thoughts and attempts at suicide. I love the fact that after Sarah's attempt at suicide, things didn't "magically turn around" for her as they would have in any other given comic, sitcom, or made-for-TV movie. For me, things still haven't "magically turned around." In fact, now I realize there is no "magic" involved because it takes work — hard personal work. It's been months for me. I don't want to kill myself, but I still have lots to work through.

I was having a pretty bad day today — I was feeling alone and depressed. I picked up your book and I feel a little better now — not "magically turned around", but a little better.

A fan,
Michael Wiebe
Santa Fe, New Mexico

P.S. In an attempt to make this letter a little less sappy, I would like to say that Julie is HOT.